GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:119
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2006
INTRODUCTION OF BIOMETRIC PASSPORTS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently decided to introduce biometric passports using sophisticated finger printing technology in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the passports at present are liable to be tampered with and manipulated; and

(d) if so, the extent to which the introduction of biometric passports is likely to put a check on alleged tampering of passports?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a & b). Yes, Sir. The Government has decided to introduce e-passports, also known as bio-metric passports, initially for diplomats and officials as a pilot project.

(c). The passports at present are machine-printed and machine-readable; and as per the specifications laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). There have been a few cases, where unscrupulous elements have tried to tamper with the passports by substituting the photographs or changing personal particulars.

(d). The incorporation of bio-metrics in the passports such as finger-prints etc will put a check on the tampering of passports and will make them more secure travel documents as per international standards.